

## THE WIZARD OF MENLO PARK.

A Short but Interesting Sketch of America's Greatest Inventor.

"Some men," says Shakespeare, "are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Mr. Edison belongs to the second class. He is essentially and above every body else a self-made man, having by sheer force of intellect won his spurs and attained to the highest pinnacle of fame. It was an uphill fight, too, from the first, and those who had watched his long and lonely struggle for "this own hand" were glad when he carried off the prize at last.

As great men go, Edison is a mere boy. He is only forty-two, having been born in Erie County, O., on the 11th of February, 1847. His father was of Dutch and his mother of Scotch descent, and his early years were spent in Port Huron, Mich. Although two months schooling was all he had, he was a perfect glutton for reading, and, at the age of twelve became a newsboy on the Grand Trunk railroad of Canada. While yet holding this position he began to experiment in chemistry, and purchasing with what little pocket-money he had some old type, printed and issued the Grand Trunk Herald, the first newspaper ever published in a railroad train. A station-master on the line, in gratitude for his having saved his little daughter from the front of an advancing car, taught him telegraphy, and thenceforth the youth who was destined to become the first scientist of his age grew up his life to the study of electricity. After a few failures in furthering his inventions, two telegraph companies in



turn availed themselves of his services, and, his inventive faculties getting full play, he took out over fifty different patents in connection with improvements in telegraphy. In 1876 the Wizard established his laboratory at Menlo Park, in New Jersey, from whence he has given invention after invention to an astonished world.

Nearly all these inventions, which number about three hundred, were to be seen at the Paris Exposition. Never before had such a collection of the great inventor's triumphs been brought together. They were exhibited with the object of tracing the history of his numerous inventions and of showing their present perfected state. Mr. Edison's exhibit occupies no less than nine thousand square feet. Four systems of electric lighting—the three-wire central station system, the two-wire isolated system, the municipal system for street lighting and the direct current transformer. Different vegetable products which Mr. Edison has experimented with in making carbons were also exhibited. He has tried two hundred different kinds of bamboo alone, and is at present using the fiber of a peculiar species of bamboo, which comes from some foreign country, but he still continues to experiment, sending men to different parts of the world with the view of discovering something which will still further perfect his carbon.

Next, there was the telephone department showing what Mr. Edison has done, from his original instrument down to his latest improved megaphone and loud-speaking telephone. Mr. Edison has devoted a large amount of his time and energies to perfecting the telephone, and here we have his multiple telephone, his autographic telephone, and many others, including his wonderful automatic telephone, which is capable of transmitting words at the lightning speed of 7,200 per minute. Then there was the telegraph department, which shows among other things that marvelous train system of telegraphing—by which messages are sent from a train traveling at fifty miles an hour on a track fifty feet from the telegraph wires.

The phonographic department was perhaps the most interesting of all. When ten years ago Mr. Edison declared that he had conceived and imperfectly constructed a machine which could distinctly repeat any sound that might be produced from a symphony in Wagner to the squall of a one-year-old baby, the world took to laughing. Today, however, his factories are turning out forty perfect machines a day, and some 1,800 are already in use in various business houses. Mr. Edison has since created a pocket phonograph, the cylinder of which will take some three hundred words—about the length of an ordinary letter. One of these is now in use at the New York World office. The machine is placed down stairs. The reporter comes in and talks into it. The cylinder is then taken up stairs to the composing-room, and the compositor set up from its dictation, not only attaining a greater speed than on the old system, but earning more money.

Mr. Edison speaks very confidently of his new ore-extracting machine, which promises to revolutionize the mining of ore. The machine has a very simple process separates the ore from the earth and leaves it ready for the furnace. As yet it is only adapted to iron ore, but the Wizard is now studying the question of a machine for dealing with both refractory silver and gold ore, and he will probably get them out in the near future.

The "far-sight machine" also promises to be a big thing, but it is absurd to say that it will enable a man to see his wife two thousand miles away. In a city, however, it will be of practical use and for the present, at least, the Wizard does not look for anything further.

Among some fifty-five yet more extraordinary inventions in progress in Mr. Edison's laboratory is one which concerns aerial navigation, and it is not unlikely that the next great revelation of science will be in that direction.

"Now in the name of all the Gods at once, Upon what madest thou this, O Caesar feed, That has grown so great?"

may well be asked of Mr. Edison. As a matter of fact his principal food is cigars, of which he smokes about twenty a day, and the more he works the more he smokes, and with him work is a religion. He generally gets through twenty hours of it every day and never takes more than four hours' sleep. Although he often works steadily in his laboratory for days together without even taking a "wash up," yet, without, though he does everything contrary to

the rules of health, he has a constitution of concrete, and is never even under the weather.

The secret of the Wizard's strength lies in his imperturbability. His individuality is so strong that he might be called influence incarnate, and in the company of his fellow-men he appears rather as a giant among pigmies than as a competitor among equals. Yet when one comes to that unwrinkled face, boyish almost in its openness, it is difficult to picture the magician who is absolutely wrestling the secrets from nature.

Mr. Edison indulges in none of the ordinary dissipations which the scientist and the man of letters can entertain. In fact he goes in for no amusement whatever, and he is above society. Yet there is nothing of the leaden-eyed, melancholy mannered savant about him, and when he once descends from the ethereal heights of science, he is as frolicsome as a boy, and he has even been known on occasion to perpetrate a joke.

### RODDY'S MORAL HEROISM.

It Was Sublime, but Lost Him the Friendship of Two Cunts.

"Roddy's coming down the street," said Cumso to Fangle. "I hear that he has caught a bass alleged to have weighed twelve pounds. Let's stop him and quiz him about it."

"All right," said Fangle. "Hello, Roddy; I hear you have been fishing."

"Much sport?"

"Fair."

"Only fair! Why, some one was telling me that you caught a fish so large that when you pulled it out of the water the river fell two inches."

"I'm afraid that's an exaggeration," protested Roddy.

"Yes; so it is," added Cumso.

"The fish was big enough, in all reason, without making it out that large."

"You gentlemen surprise me very much," said Roddy. "I didn't catch anything very big."

"Well," said Cumso, "I think a twelve-pound bass is a pretty good-sized fish."

"Who says I caught a bass of that weight?"

"Why, it's all over town."

"You don't say! Why, my usefulness as a Sunday-school superintendent will be ruined if it is thought I tell such whoppers as that. Why, gentlemen, I assure you that the largest fish I caught weighed only two pounds and a quarter."

With a low, incredulous and simultaneous whistle, Cumso and Fangle sneaked away.

They could not endure the presence of a man who told the truth about his catch of fish.—William H. Siviter, in *Jur.*

### LIKE A BIG SAFE.

The Queer Mud House Called a Kura, in Which Japanese Live.

The combustible nature of Japanese houses renders large fires a frequent and disastrous calamity; hence since a long time ago the more wealthy Japanese merchants as well as farmers have been in the habit of building a kura or fire-proof mud house contiguous to their shops and dwellings, yet generally entirely isolated.

Into these are hurried at the first alarm which indicates a fire approaching the premises the portable property, household stuffs, merchandise, etc., and the kura is then closed, and if time permits, the joints of windows and doors are sealed with fresh mud. A fire passing around and over such a structure will leave its contents unharmed.

It is a very common thing to see in Yokohama, in the streets of the native town, many of these kura built with much attention to architectural effect. They resemble very closely gigantic fire-proof safes, which may be one, two and even three stories high. They have heavy projecting roofs, concavely curved, covered with extremely heavy tiles of black terra cotta.

The gable end always faces the street. In each story is a window-like opening heavily barred with iron for lighting the interior. These are closed at night and in case of fire by heavy-looking

doors exactly resembling those of our fire-proof office safes at home in appearance. The whole structure is smoothly stuccoed and painted black. The entrance is placed where most convenient to the owner.

The kura is built of a light framework of wood, between the openings of which is securely fastened open wicker-work of bamboo, writes a correspondent of the Detroit Free Press. Then the whole wall surface inside and out is solidly filled with stiff plastic mud taken from the bottom of the river, and when thoroughly dried is smoothly covered with stucco, often treated ornamentally. No wood or other combustible material appears on the surface anywhere, and except for the color the kura would form quite an ornamental feature among the houses.

SETTLED.

Paradise Regained.

Clara—I hear you had a romantic wedding.

Adèle—Yes; Willie and I were married in a balloon, seven thousand feet in the air.

Clara—Nice?

Adèle—I was really in a seventh heaven.—Time.

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## AGRICULTURAL HINTS.

### STOCK CATTLE.

A Woeful Shortage of Good Bulls as Well as Steers.

That farmers and cattle-growers generally have in many cases allowed their dissatisfaction with the course of the market for the past few years to get the better of their judgment is now fully and freely recognized. It is conceded on every hand, says the Breeder's Gazette, by commission dealers at the yards and by all whose business leads them to scan closely the extent and character of the available supply in leading cattle-growing districts that there has been a woeful deterioration in the quality of the ordinary stock cattle of the country; that through indifference and discouragement there has been a lack of attention to proper breeding and management which is beginning to tell sharply in every direction, and the most inveterate "croakers" are fast having the conviction forced upon their minds that present conditions are such as foreshadow a general reaction in favor of all the really meritorious grades.

Well-bred stock cattle and well-bred bulls are to-day in shorter supply than at any time during the past ten years, and those who inform themselves soonest upon these points will be able to restore their herds to their proper standard at least cost. Those buyers who are visiting one breeding establishment after another in quest of young bulls of a proper degree of individual merit in the belief that they are worth no more this spring than they have been during the past few years may as well face the fact now as later on that the bulls are not likely to be had for any length of time upon any such basis, simply because of the general depression of thousands of breeding cows have been sacrificed for lack of a market for their progeny. Localities in which hundreds of pure-bred cows were formerly maintained for breeding purposes report that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to fill orders either for good bulls to head pedigreed herds or for car-load lots for grading purposes. The scarcity of good bulls is therefore not merely prospective or theoretical, but a condition to be met by those who now stand in urgent need of good blood to repair the damage done by a long period of neglect.

There is a great temptation in the early spring to let stock run down even more than the average manager lets it run down in the winter. It may be that feed gets scarce and we begin to pinch a little. It is very unwise management. Keep up the feeding even if you must buy feed. But turning out on pasture too early is the great fault. The pasture is the resource to which some of the general depression thousands of breeding cows have been sacrificed for lack of a market for their progeny. Localities in which hundreds of pure-bred cows were formerly maintained for breeding purposes report that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to fill orders either for good bulls to head pedigreed herds or for car-load lots for grading purposes. The scarcity of good bulls is therefore not merely prospective or theoretical, but a condition to be met by those who now stand in urgent need of good blood to repair the damage done by a long period of neglect.

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